

Rt Hon Alun Michael JP OStJ FRSA

Comisiynydd yr Heddlu a Throseddu De Cymru  
Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales



20 November 2019

*Dear Home Secretary,*

**POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER RESPONSE TO THE HMICFRS REPORT:  
Shining a Light on Betrayal: Abuse of position for a sexual purpose**

This report deals with a very shocking and difficult subject and rightly draws attention to the ongoing need for us all to be very vigilant and proactive in ensuring that police officers and staff do not abuse their power for a sexual purpose.

Chief Officers in South Wales Police have been working hard to address this issue because of its central importance to confidence in the police and that has included taking account of previous findings and recommendations on this subject. It has been a matter of discussion with the Chief Constable and his predecessor and I know that they are deeply committed to maintaining the progress that is being made. Some of the recommendations in the report are already being addressed or are complete. For example, in relation to the first recommendation, the force's compliance with vetting was referred to in the PEEL Inspection 2019, published in September.

My team and I work closely with the South Wales Police Professional Standards Department to monitor and understand the ongoing initiatives to eradicate any abuse of power. The Chief Constable shares my view that this is a serious issue and that South Wales Police must be committed to understanding any problems in our force and to dealing with them appropriately.

The Chief Constable sheds further light on his commitment to this in his below comments on the report:

*'South Wales Police is absolutely determined to identify and drive out incidents where police staff members and officers abuse their position; we police the communities of South Wales with the consent of the public and we are determined to maintain public trust and confidence in the services that we provide.*

*Police officers abusing their position for sexual gain and ensuring that professional boundaries are maintained features as a top priority for the organisation and particularly our Professional Standards Department and our Senior Management Teams.*

*South Wales Police raise awareness amongst staff and partners to ensure the early identification of those who potentially abuse their powers to perpetrate sexual relationships with vulnerable persons. Intelligence gathering allows for early*

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Mae'r Comisiynydd a'i dîm yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg  
The Commissioner and his team welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English

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*intervention so vulnerable victims are safeguarded as well as safeguarding members of staff where appropriate.*

*We aim to ensure there is a clear auditable analytical process in place to identify and bring to justice those officers and members of staff who abuse their powers so a high level of public confidence in the service can be maintained.*

*On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019, we launched the crime stoppers police integrity line. The communication campaign headed by ACC Jeremy Vaughan is being supported by a range of communication methods and merchandising to encourage staff to have the confidence to report concerns and may do so anonymously.'*

In recent weeks we launched our Joint Strategy to tackle Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in which we were strongly supported by the Welsh Government Minister, Jane Hutt AM, and also by the Victims Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird QC. During the launch event, which was attended by a number of our partner organisations, the link between the behaviour of some officers and a significant threat to the confidence of victims was very clear indeed. It is not an issue in isolation or just about police discipline.

In conclusion, there is a lot of work taking place locally to deal with matters of abuse of power and I will continue to hold the force to account on the issues raised in this report, as well as working with the Chief Constable to ensure that the recommendations for forces are implemented here.

Yours sincerely

**Rt Hon Alun Michael**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales**